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The Demographic Characteristics of Britain To-day and their Implications

OUR COMPLEX DEMOGRAPHIC situation is very fully documented in British official statistics. The following is a brief and purely personal survey in which an attempt is made to distinguish the main components of the complex from less important detail, and attention is drawn to the broad issues that arise, especially where there is a eugenic interest. Sometimes comparison with other countries, or with the immediate past and probable future, may help to identify the high-lights. In such a survey, questions of why certain changes have occurred, or are occurring, almost inevitably arise. Such questions must remain largely unanswered, but in their consideration at least an interesting background to current research projects in Western countries may be provided.

Most of the supporting data have been exhibited in the pages of the REVIEW during the past few (years usually under the heading "Some Facts") and need not be shown again now; tables of figures are not really necessary for present purposes, and might even distract from the development of the argument.

Growth and Distribution

During its long period of intensive growth the British population has tended to rise by an increment of 2-3 million persons a decade. The rate of increase thus slowly fell, eventually to about $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent per annum. Quite recently however there has been a rise to $\frac{3}{4}$ per cent per annum, and the rate may go up still further in future. This is both interesting and important. While the population increased by only 20 per cent between 1921 and 1961, according to the latest official projections it will grow by about 40 per cent between 1961 and 2001, or by rather less than 1 per cent per annum. Even such an increase is still a modest rate by the world standards of to-day. With the exception of Japan, the only sizeable national populations with a current growth rate of less than $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent per annum are to be found in Europe. Even in Europe, however, more of the population is to be found to-day in countries with current annual growth rates of more than 1 per cent than in countries with growth rates lower than this.

Within the British Isles the rate of growth varies considerably from one area to another. Between the 1951 and 1961 censuses it was highest in England (0.54 per cent per annum) but it was materially lower in Wales (0.16); Scotland (0.24) and Northern Ireland (0.39) and in the associated islands. Migration is an important factor in these differences. The component elements of growth in England and Wales were: births 7.1 million; deaths 5.2 million; and net inward migration 0.4 million; but there was a material variation from year to year during this period. For instance, the excess of births over deaths in England and Wales was as low as 159,000 in 1952-3 and as high as 251,000 in 1959-60, while these same years the net migration was respectively 24,000 outwards and 108,000 inwards. The areas of England "benefiting" from migration were the Eastern (a gain of 455 thousand people) South Eastern (319 thousand) and Southern (237 thousand). Small losses were recorded for many of the other regions.

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The distribution of the population by geographic area and between town and country, and the way in which this is developing year by year, will not be enlarged upon here. It is a well-explored topic, although there is much still to learn as to causes and consequences. The main significance is economic rather than biological. Nevertheless, many members of the Eugenics Society may regret the increased crowding that results in the popular areas, and is likely to worsen in future. Composition by social group can have more meaning in relation to inherited abilities but, in the short-term at any rate, changes in composition are too strongly influenced by economic and political factors to be reliable as biological indicators. That this is so is emphasized by the changes it is found necessary to make from time to time in the official definition of the socio-economic groupings. The increase in the "superior" occupations is probably a welcome sign of development, but needs to be interpreted with caution.

Of more interest for present purposes is the age composition of the population, because of the important effect this has on the significance of birth and death rates. In the long run, these rates in turn influence the age composition of the population. An understanding of the demographic process of ageing (as opposed to the biological process in individuals) is therefore important, particularly in connection with projecting the population into the future. Detailed studies carried out with great care have shown that the predominant influence on ageing in most western countries during the past hundred years has been fertility. Because of the decline in births, the relative numbers of the young have been reduced and the proportions of the aged have risen as a consequence. The part played in the process by mortality and migration has been less important. The recrudescence of fertility now envisaged in the official projections of the British population is expected to be associated with first a stabilization and then a slight fall in the proportion of the old, thus halting and then reversing the trend which has become so well-known as to enter deeply into all our thoughts and feelings. The change in outlook has not yet been very well assimilated and it is still possible to hear public reference to "our ageing population." It is clearly important to realize that we are entering a new situation. This will have an increased emphasis upon youth that should help to provide a more adaptable population for all purposes.

When demographic characteristics are analysed, the component elements of fertility, mortality and migration can readily be separated out, and it is tempting to ascribe the "causes" of population developments to these factors. To do so is, however, not to solve the problem of causation, but merely to reclassify it, and to explore this problem in any depth it is necessary to study these components much further.

Family Size

As is evident from general considerations, fertility is the main-spring not only of ageing but also of population growth itself; (ageing and its converse indeed emerge as a result of variations in the growth rate from time to time). In western countries, where mortality has been reduced to a more or less uniformly low level, the relationship between ultimate family size per couple and annual population growth rate to-day can be expressed approximately as follows:

TABLE 1

AVERAGE NUMBER OF CHILDREN IN COMPLETED FAMILY	RATE OF POPULATION INCREASE PER ANNUM
2	$\frac{3}{4}$
$2\frac{1}{2}$	$1\frac{1}{4}$
3	$2\frac{1}{4}$
$3\frac{1}{2}$	3
4	

The equivalence between the two columns of figures is essentially a long-term one and is liable to be temporarily disturbed by fluctuations. Nevertheless, the table has clear implications. Several speakers have drawn attention to the need for stabilizing our own population before it becomes too densely crowded for these small islands. At the 1966 meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, references were made to the problems for agriculture created by the growth in British population, coupled with the increasing use of land for non-agricultural purposes. Professor Ellison, taking as his target the provision at home of one-half of the national food requirements, referred to the need for a 30 per cent increase in output by the end of the century.

A slowing down of excessive growth is probably the best the world can hope for in the next decade or two; but, for Britain, Sir Joseph Hutchinson, President of the Association, argued in favour of an actual *reduction* in population. As a target figure, he set a total of only forty million, or about three-quarters of the present numbers. It is interesting to note that this target figure happens to be the same as that proposed in a debate held by the Eugenics Society ten years ago, under the chairmanship of Sir Charles Darwin. The motion was "that the population of the United Kingdom should be stabilized at 40 million." On that occasion there were some interesting exchanges, and the outcome can perhaps reasonably be regarded as a drawn battle.

One important difference between the Society's discussion and Sir Joseph Hutchinson's proposal relates to the means of securing the transition. In introducing the debate, Dr. Blacker advocated a programme designed to raise fertility in Britain and promote emigration to the Commonwealth. Sir Joseph, on the other hand, suggested a reduction in fertility, and that we should accept as normal a family size of one or two, or occasionally three, children. In these days of almost universal marriage, small families will be essential for the purpose of limiting population growth permanently.

The popular idea of a small family is, however, probably losing ground at the present time. A survey of intended family sizes, conducted among recently-married couples in the city of Hull, showed that few were thinking in terms of less than two children, while over 40 per cent were planning for more than two. Nearly three-quarters of the couples regarded more than two as "ideal".

In England and Wales, the average ultimate family size fell from roughly $2\frac{1}{2}$ for couples married just after the First World War to about 2 for those married just before the Second; this decline is, of course, the tail-piece of a more prolonged and pronounced fall which began before the twentieth century started. Family size has, however, risen again, to about $2\frac{1}{2}$ for those married in the early nineteen-fifties and it may go up as far as $2\frac{3}{4}$ for those married in the early 'sixties. The population growth rate has fallen and risen in a comparable manner, though not so widely as the foregoing table might suggest. One of the main reasons for narrower variation is that the couples married in different years are all present together in the population at any one time, and this has an averaging effect.

Population growth is also influenced by marriage and migration, and because of low marriage rates in the 1930s the generations born in the first decade of the twentieth century actually replaced themselves only to the extent of about two-thirds. Those born since about 1930 have, however, fully reproduced their numbers and it is currently expected that those born since 1950 will do more than this.

International Contrasts

Before the underlying reasons for these major movements are considered, a few simple contrasts with other countries seem worth drawing. The following items have been recorded in the REVIEW during the past few years:

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- i. The population of the United States of America has recently been growing at nearly 2 per cent per annum; average family sizes are perhaps one-third higher than in Britain, and large families are much more common. The position in Russia appears to be similar to that in America.
- ii. The French population has overtaken that of England and Wales, because of a growth rate some $\frac{1}{4}$ per cent per annum higher, and fertility within marriage has been about one-tenth higher than on this side of the Channel.
- iii. Birth rates in the English-speaking Commonwealth are about one-half as high again as in Britain, and the annual rate of natural increase is nearly 2 per cent, to which immigration adds another $\frac{1}{4}$ per cent or so.
- iv. In Western Europe, birth rates are mostly a little higher than in Britain, and growth rates during the 1950s were about double ours.
- v. In many European countries, a falling tendency in the numbers of births was halted during the nineteen-fifties and a rising tendency took its place; in Eastern Europe, however, this period was one of rapidly-falling birth rates, and as much as one-third of the level of the immediate post-war years was lost.

British shared in the general West European experience until 1965; analysis shows that the rising tendency here was quite general for all years and durations of marriage and for all family sizes. In 1965, however, a reaction set in. This reaction is also paralleled elsewhere—there have been falls in Australia, New Zealand and the United States of America very recently. In America, indeed, the legitimate fertility rate per married woman of reproductive age has fallen by about 20 per cent during the past five years. Studies have disclosed that this is partly the aftermath of a period of abnormally high fertility, and accordingly the fall does not represent a real decline in any long-term sense. The abnormality in question was occasioned by “bunching-up”; while older couples were making up for delays in family building occasioned by the conditions of the nineteen-forties, it is said, younger persons were marrying and having their children earlier, because of favourable economic conditions. Such bunching-up creates a temporary rise in the fertility level. It is destined to be followed by a fall, because in the next period there will no longer be any older couples with delays to compensate for. A somewhat similar state of affairs has been described in recent British fertility statistics.

The interpretation of these facts forms an essential background to the problem of forecasting future trends, but does not make it immediately apparent whether a rise, a fall, or a steady state in the birth rate is likely to be experienced during the nineteen-seventies. A case could be made out for any of these. Attempts to predict on the basis of couples’ “ideals” are not likely to be very successful, as it has been shown from inquiries in various countries that these ideals are liable not to be fulfilled in practice. It has not proved possible to associate recent changes in fertility convincingly with variations in economic prosperity, although some American research has suggested that there is a connection with peoples’ personal evaluation of their wealth, in contrast to that of parents and neighbours. Investigations into actual “intentions” (such as the one mentioned above) are more promising, and surveys of this kind are being undertaken in various countries. They appear to give a good clue to what is going to happen. They may reveal the characteristics and factors most closely associated with family building, and so provide not only a pointer to the future but also some hints as to the best ways in which eugenic influences could be brought to bear.

Some of the international differences to which attention has been drawn above have another aspect of interest; they reflect disparities, in space and time, in official population policy. The high fertility in France in recent years, for instance, is probably associated with family allowance policy, and with restrictions on the availability of contraceptives

and family planning advice. The rapid decline in fertility in Eastern Europe seems to have been the consequence of the removal of similar restrictions. The degree of effectiveness of official measures to stimulate, or discourage, fertility is a useful gauge of the eventual prospects for the success of eugenic measures if they should obtain official backing.

Evidently there are other factors at work, for instance "cultural" habits based on historical tradition, class or religion. These are difficult to evaluate and slow to alter, but in the long run they should be amenable to influence.

Some interesting light on the problems of assessing the effects of changes in population policy was thrown by some recent public correspondence in France. The Minister for Health and Population addressed the following two questions to the National Institute for Demographic Studies:

1. Which legislative measures would be necessary to develop the birth rate in France?
2. What would be the effect on the birth rate if a more liberal policy concerning birth control were adopted?

Family size per couple is, on the average, somewhat larger in France than in Britain. Why, then, ask how to increase it still further? The first question is perhaps the logical complement of the second: if a more liberal policy were adopted concerning birth control, then there would be a risk of a material fall in fertility, and it might be desirable to have, in reserve, powers which could be used to offset this fall, in case it became too substantial.

An important element is the extent of contraceptive practice, and in lesser degree also the methods used. Recent surveys in Britain have shown that each successive group of marriages is practising control more fully than the last, that class differences in this respect have nearly vanished and that disparities between religious groups are narrowing. Methods are slowly improving, although there is room for better development. The picture is thus favourable for the impact of any official policy, and tending to improve still further. Nevertheless, the popular family size in Britain, as elsewhere, is evidently higher than is compatible with a steady total population, and is perhaps rising with increasing economic prosperity. A way of influencing this has yet to be found in practice; although financial deterrents to large families would no doubt be as effective as financial incentives have been, the present climate of thought with its emphasis on help for poorer (and larger) families is altogether opposed to this idea.

Marriage

Marriage is almost universal in most countries, and Britain is no exception. It is largely free from the element of non-marriage and late marriage found in Eire, although there are some interesting social class differences and secular trends.

The proportion marrying and the age at marriage have tended to oscillate slowly during the last hundred years. Early in the century marriage was early and common. Between the wars it was late and relatively uncommon. Since 1938 the numbers per annum have varied little but the rate has gone up. The ages at marriage have become steadily younger for both sexes. The average has fallen from twenty-eight to twenty-five for bachelors and from twenty-five to twenty-three for spinsters.

Naturally, in these circumstances bachelors and spinsters have become scarcer. Their proportions at ages twenty to thirty-nine have fallen during the last thirty years from 45 to 30 per cent for men and from 40 to 20 per cent for women. Although widowed and divorced persons are included in these figures, their numbers are relatively insignificant and do not influence the result to any degree.

Having regard to the normal age at marriage, which is older for men than for women, the excess of the figure for bachelors over those for spinsters is to be expected. It is interesting

to note, however, that the reduction in time in the numbers of the young unmarried has been much greater for women than for men. This is because the relative numbers of the sexes have changed: in earlier days, the supply of men of marriageable age was depleted by emigration and by excess mortality, but these causes of depletion have largely been removed, with the result that there has been a relatively greater improvement in marriage prospects for women than for men. Consequently, fewer women than men remain unmarried—a reversal of an earlier pattern. A survey of ten countries for which adequate statistics are available shows the following features:

- i. The age of women at marriage is younger than that for men in all cases;
- ii. There has been a move towards earlier marriage throughout Europe—although an opposite tendency is observable in Japan and Thailand.
- iii. A reduction in spinsterhood greater than that in bachelorhood is observable in a few countries, e.g. in Poland, but is not general; in the United States of America the tendency appears to be in the opposite direction. (Countries from which large-scale emigration to the United States occurred would be expected to experience the same effects from the cessation of that migration as Britain has, while as the receiving country the USA would be expected to exhibit a contrary movement).

A topic of current importance in Britain is the effect on marriage rates of the exceptionally large numbers of births immediately after the Second World War. This now shows as an increase in the number of young men and women aged up to twenty. Because men marry later than women, the boys and girls in this group will not, in general, marry each other. Consequently some disturbances in marriage rates, and in the numbers of the unmarried, are to be expected owing to the inequality between the sexes in the numbers available for marriage.

Such fluctuations may well have a temporary rather than a lasting effect, although some American sociologists have suggested that the corresponding feature in the USA may give rise to a more permanent increase in the proportion of women unmarried. In any event, they are hardly amenable to any kind of influence or control, however unsatisfactory they may appear. A shift in the proportion of marriages from one age group to another need not in theory make any difference in the family size the couple will have—although in practice the relativities between the numbers of children born to couples marrying at different ages have remained comparatively constant in spite of many changes in the level of fertility and shifts in the marriage pattern. Those marrying at ages under twenty have nearly twice as many children as those marrying at twenty-five to twenty-nine and four to five times as many as those marrying at ages thirty-five to thirty-nine. Thus younger marriages in Britain in recent years, as compared with between the wars, may have been reflected in up to a 10 per cent increase in family size, or nearly one-quarter of a child per couple on average. In fact, however, it is doubtful whether it is either desirable or useful to attempt to cause any change in the propensity to marry. Control of fertility is much more effective and easy.

Differential Fertility

Fertility differences are a subject of special interest, and a good account of the present position and trends is available from the 1951 and 1961 Censuses.

The most striking differences in fertility arise from the standardized comparison of the experience of gainfully occupied married women with that of all married women. The proportion of occupied married women who had borne a child during the twelve months preceding the 1951 census was only one-sixth as large as the corresponding proportion for all married women, and the average number of children in the families of occupied married

women were only 72 per cent of the general average family size. It must be remembered, however, that most married women are occupied only in the early years of their marriage and that when they later leave work their experience will tend to catch up with the general average.

Although so widely-spread as to be rather imprecise as indicators, the Registrar General's five social classes give some general idea of differential fertility. It is particularly useful that data for these classes are available for every census from 1911 onwards, even though the composition and proportions of the classes has changed in the last fifty years and the type of data available for them varies somewhat from census to census. In very broad terms the categories are:

- i. Higher professional and managerial.
- ii. Lower professional and executive.
- iii. Clerks and skilled tradesmen.
- iv. Semi-skilled workers.
- v. Unskilled workers.

The 1951 census results for married women aged forty-five to forty-nine revealed a social class spread with a range of 81 (Class I) to 126 (Class V), which was similar to the differentials at earlier censuses. When, however, the families of younger married women were included, the range was reduced to 90-120; and when the children born to married women in the year ending on the census date were considered in isolation, the range not only narrowed further (101-119) but lost its uniformity: Class I (101) rose above Class II (92) and Class III (96).

The analysis was confirmed by the results when expressed in terms of socio-economic groups. The index for higher administrative and professional men was up to the national level; an interesting analysis of this group by age at cessation of full-time education shows that in it the most highly educated now have the largest families. This is another development, to which sample studies had pointed but which had not before been evident from British official population statistics.

The 1961 Census data show how the socio-economic differences in fertility have developed, and also supply new facts concerning educational differences. In addition, there is some information about the fertility of working women according to occupation group, and about family size classified by place of birth.

The socio-economic groups into which the Registrar General for England and Wales has subdivided the 1961 census fertility data are nineteen in number, and they do not correspond exactly with the fourteen categories of 1951. It is of interest to observe that the index figure for self-employed professional workers is well above the national average, and this suggests that there has been at least a continuation, and perhaps an intensification, of the feature found in 1951.

Measurement for the 1961 Census socio-economic groups of the percentage increase in family size from couples married for twenty-five to twenty-nine years to couples married for fifteen to nineteen years gives evidence of a positive association between high social class and increase in family size. The better the class, the more the recent increase in fertility. Such a tendency is changing the shape of the differentials. Thus, the average family size in 1961 of couples married for fifteen to nineteen years (unstandardized for age at marriage) falls from 2.2 for self-employed professional workers to 1.8 for junior non-manuals and then rises to 2.3 for unskilled manual. In other words, the curve associating family size and job sophistication is now U-shaped. But in spite of recent trends there is still on the whole slightly negative correlation between class and fertility.

Comparison of the 1951 and 1961 Census results for certain aggregates of socio-

economic groups also shows some re-distributive effect. It is interesting to observe, however, that the families of unskilled manual workers have declined less, or risen more, than those of semi-skilled manuals, and have developed more similarly to those for skilled manuals.

A situation in which fertility is higher at the social extremes than it is in the middle groups is revealed again in statistics classified by the age at which education ceased. For instance, in cases where the age group at which education ceased is the same for both husband and wife, the average family size after twenty to twenty-four years of marriage is highest for the youngest age (under fifteen: 2.05) and the oldest age (twenty and over: 1.99) but lower for the intermediate age-groups (fifteen to sixteen: 1.78 and seventeen to nineteen: 1.85). The same feature is found for men who married relatively uneducated wives, and for women who married relatively well-educated husbands. But family size falls uniformly as the terminal education age rises for the following two categories:

- a. well-educated wives, and
- b. poorly-educated husbands.

It seems that in such cases the relatively poor education of the husband, compared with that of the wife, leads to low fertility—presumably for economic reasons.

Among occupied married women, the family size of those in professional and technical occupations is significantly higher than the average for all occupations, although—as might be expected—this average is lower than for non-occupied married women.

The fertility of women, now in Britain, who hail from Eire is well in excess of the average (some 40 per cent up) and much the same is true of those who come from India, Ceylon, Pakistan and the Caribbean. A smaller excess fertility is found for those who originated in Africa, Malta, Cyprus and Northern Ireland. Per contra, the fertility of women born in this country is slightly below the average for all places of origin in combination.

Current studies of differential fertility in the United States of America reveal a situation similar to that in Britain some years ago. It will be interesting to see whether the more recent tendencies on this side of the Atlantic, reflecting perhaps a new consciousness of their value on the part of some of our best-equipped people, will be matched in America in due course.

Differential Marriage

The effects of differential fertility could be mitigated or even offset if there were an association between social class and the propensity to marry, and if the higher the social status the greater were the proportion married, or the younger the age at marriage.

By and large, however, most occupied men marry, and there is little difference between the social groups in the proportion ultimately marrying. The higher-numbered classes, e.g. unskilled workers, tend to marry rather earlier than the lower-numbered ones; this tends to increase the length of a generation, relatively, and so to slow growth—but the effect in practice is not large. In certain 1951 Census data, the range of fertility within marriage was from about 80 per cent to about 125 per cent, according to class. Adjustment for the marriage factor produced indexes of general fertility with a range of about 80–115 per cent, thus leaving more than three-quarters of the spread in being.

In analyses of the negative relationship between intelligence and fertility, it has been found that the relationship may be largely nullified by a positive association between intelligence and marriage. Much of this positive association arises, however, from the fact that those of the lowest intelligence are unable to marry. The retardation which prevents this usually also precludes entry into the labour force and therefore such persons do not figure in social class data. Thus the demographic statistics, which are essentially based on occupational analysis, do not bear out the findings of research on intelligence and population growth.

Mortality

It is often said that death control has outrun birth control. Whether or not this is regarded as true in Britain, it is certainly evident that death control has made rapid advances, especially in respect of the period of life between birth and the effective end of reproduction. In middle-age and later life the improvements have been more modest, and for men in middle life it is doubtful whether mortality is diminishing at all at the present time.

While the national death rate for all ages in combination is of the order of 1 per cent per annum, there is a great variation from age to age. In the first sixty years of life, apart from the first, the rate is below 1 per cent—usually a long way below. In the first twelve months the rate is 2 per cent, and once pension age is passed very much higher figures are experienced. The age-distribution of deaths is heavily weighted towards the elderly.

Mortality plays an important part in demographic analysis, and in population projection. A significant advance in the prolongation of life—always a possibility, as research proceeds—could have a remarkable effect upon the social and financial structure of the nation. Nevertheless, its interest is limited from the point of view of the biological quality of future generations, as little evidence has been found that longevity is inherited, apart from the early deaths attributable to certain congenital defects whose incidence among live-born children is relatively small taking the population as a whole.

There are, however, persistent differentials in infant mortality between the social classes, and between different types of area. For instance, in 1950, the range for counties of England and Wales was from 2 to 4 per cent, i.e. about 70 per cent of the mean. The range for social classes in 1951 was even wider: 2 to 5 per cent. These are considerable variations with a span comparable to that mentioned above for fertility. Nevertheless, their effect in reducing fertility differentials is clearly of little importance.

Migration

The numbers and quality of migrants can have much significance if the composition of the population is being significantly affected. Some reference has been made above to the extent of the transfers into and out of the country in recent years. Official statistics also give some information as to the characteristics of the people gained and lost. From general comment it is easy to form an impression that good material is going out and inferior replacements are coming in. Attracted by better opportunities of every kind, in the Commonwealth and in the United States, some of our most skilled scientists and professional people are leaving us, and the hypothesis has been advanced that those who seek the wider field must be more go-ahead than those who remain and so accept conditions as they are. If this is true of those who leave, it is presumably also true of those who come in, however; for this reason at least it seems desirable to re-examine such statistical evidence as is available. There is information about the age and sex of emigrants and immigrants, and of the occupational distribution of both, and there is also a record of the demographic characteristics of all those who were born abroad, which can be set alongside the particulars of those born in Britain and still present here.

The age-distributions of those who have come in and gone out are closely similar. The proportions of men to women, which showed a reasonable balance between the sexes, have also been little different for emigrants and immigrants. Although those who move are younger than the population as a whole, in so far as leavers and arrivers are balanced in number the effects of this will be negligible.

A distribution by occupation, in about a dozen broad groups, in respect of those who moved in and out in 1958, similarly showed a remarkably close consistency, and gave no evidence of loss of quality. Without a closer sub-division, however, little can be concluded

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from this. Specifically, over 1,000 teachers, 500 doctors, 1,300 nurses and 600 engineers and scientists were lost, on balance, in that year, and later statistics have shown a similar net flow.

A further factor is that immigrants may not find it easy to obtain a job in the sphere in which they are best qualified. If, then, the occupational or socio-economic grouping of those born overseas is studied, it needs to be borne in mind that their educational quality may in fact be rather better than the figures would appear to show. Data given in the June, 1966, issue of the *REVIEW* indicated, in fact, that the distribution of persons born in Asia, Africa and the Mediterranean among the five social classes was similar to that of all persons born in Britain. Indeed, the proportions of employers, managers and professional people were slightly higher than average for immigrants, except for those from the Caribbean. This information, again, is subject to the limitation of insufficiently close analysis.

While it would be desirable to have more detailed statistics, and research is thus desirable, the scale of migratory movement, in relation both to the size of the population and its rate of growth, seems unlikely to present problems of sufficient magnitude to have important implications for quality. Although in the net result adverse effects may be occurring among the most highly skilled and qualified, the general pattern is one of broad replacement by age, sex, occupation and social position.

Research into the characteristics of returning migrants showed—not surprisingly—that they are older than normal emigrants and immigrants, but that the general level of their social class composition is neither markedly higher nor markedly lower than that of immigrants generally or the population at large.

CONCLUSION

THIS SURVEY IS brief, because it attempts to draw a few general conclusions from the principal British demographic facts that have been discussed in the *REVIEW* during recent years. It is also different in character from most demographic summaries because it deals only with those aspects of the population and its changes that seem most likely to have a bearing upon the biological quality of future generations.

The first characteristic noted is the growth of the population and its increasing concentration in certain areas. Little space is devoted to this question, however, because it has already been so well explored. Of more interest, perhaps, are the recent variations in the numbers of births, and their implications for future growth. They raise questions of demographic policy, if only to speculate how effective such a policy could be and how it might be put into effect.

References are made to differential fertility, which is not only a subject of perennial interest but also a sphere of changing balances of forces; the direction of development appears favourable and marriage differentials are also helpful. Nevertheless, there is still room for improvement.

Mortality and migration are briefly touched upon, but the main significance in these important subjects is outside the scope of the interests that readers of the *REVIEW* have in common.